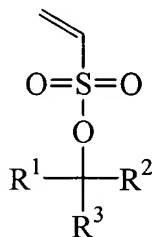


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

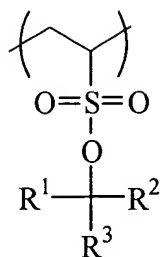
1. (Currently Amended) A sulfonate compound having the following general formula (1):



(1)

wherein R<sup>1</sup> to R<sup>3</sup> each are ~~hydrogen~~, fluorine or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, at least one of R<sup>1</sup> to R<sup>3</sup> contains fluorine, R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>3</sup>, or R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup>, taken together, may form a ring, each of R<sup>1</sup> to R<sup>3</sup> is a straight or branched alkylene or fluorinated alkylene group of 1 to 18 carbon atoms, preferably 1 to 10 carbon atoms, when they form a ring.

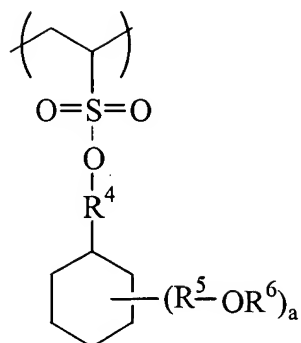
2. (Original) A polymer comprising recurring units of the following general formula (2) and having a weight average molecular weight of 1,000 to 500,000,



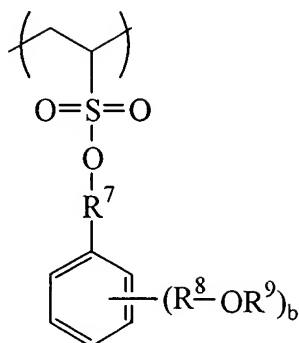
(2)

wherein  $\text{R}^1$  to  $\text{R}^3$  each are hydrogen, fluorine or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, at least one of  $\text{R}^1$  to  $\text{R}^3$  contains fluorine,  $\text{R}^1$  and  $\text{R}^2$ ,  $\text{R}^1$  and  $\text{R}^3$ , or  $\text{R}^2$  and  $\text{R}^3$ , taken together, may form a ring, each of  $\text{R}^1$  to  $\text{R}^3$  is a straight or branched alkylene or fluorinated alkylene group of 1 to 18 carbon atoms, preferably 1 to 10 carbon atoms, when they form a ring.

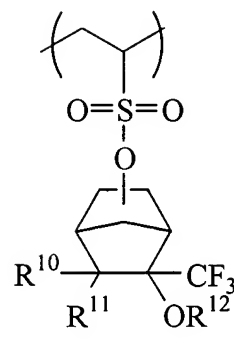
3. (Original) The polymer of claim 2, further comprising recurring units of at least one type selected from the following general formulae (3a) to (3f):



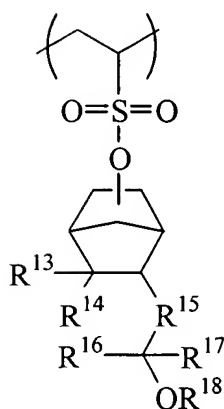
(3a)



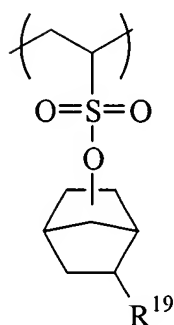
(3b)



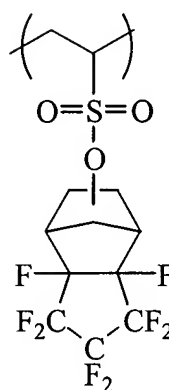
(3c)



(3d)



(3e)

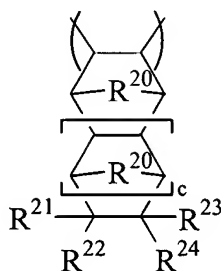


(3f)

wherein  $R^4$ ,  $R^5$ ,  $R^7$ ,  $R^8$  and  $R^{15}$  each are a single bond or a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene or fluorinated alkylene group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms,  $R^6$ ,  $R^9$ ,  $R^{12}$  and  $R^{18}$  each are hydrogen or an acid labile group,  $R^{10}$ ,  $R^{11}$ ,  $R^{13}$ ,  $R^{14}$ ,  $R^{16}$  and  $R^{17}$  each are hydrogen, fluorine, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, at least one of  $R^{16}$  and  $R^{17}$  contains at least one fluorine atom,  $R^{19}$  is a straight, branched or cyclic

fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, "a" and "b" each are 1 or 2.

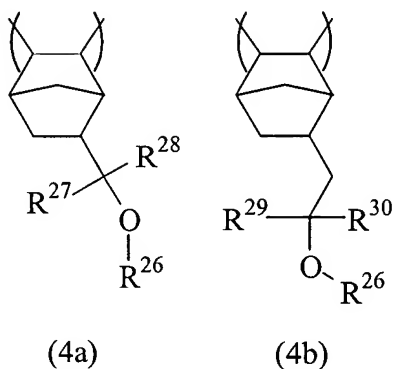
4. (Original) The polymer of claim 2, further comprising recurring units of the following general formula (4):



(4)

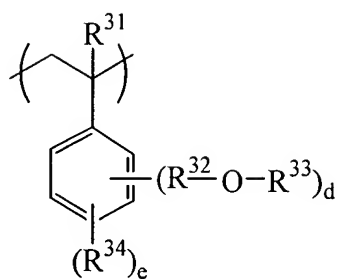
wherein  $R^{20}$  is a methylene group, oxygen atom or sulfur atom,  $R^{21}$  to  $R^{24}$  each are hydrogen, fluorine,  $-R^{25}-OR^{26}$ ,  $-R^{25}-CO_2R^{26}$  or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, at least one of  $R^{21}$  to  $R^{24}$  containing  $-R^{25}-OR^{26}$  or  $-R^{25}-CO_2R^{26}$ ,  $R^{25}$  is a single bond or a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene or fluorinated alkylene group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms,  $R^{26}$  is hydrogen, an acid labile group, adhesive group or a straight, branched or cyclic fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydrophilic group such as hydroxyl, and c is 0 or 1.

5. (Original) The polymer of claim 4 wherein said recurring units of formula (4) have a structure of the following general formula (4a) or (4b):



wherein  $R^{26}$  is as defined above,  $R^{27}$  to  $R^{30}$  each are hydrogen, fluorine or an alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, at least either one of  $R^{27}$  and  $R^{28}$  contains at least one fluorine atom, and at least either one of  $R^{29}$  and  $R^{30}$  contains at least one fluorine atom.

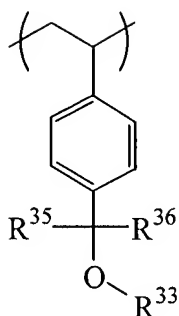
6. (Original) The polymer of claim 2, further comprising recurring units of the following general formula (5):



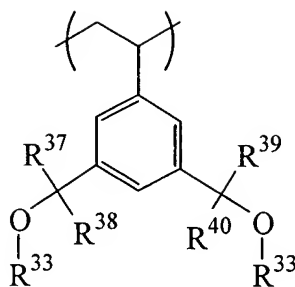
(5)

wherein  $R^{31}$  is hydrogen, fluorine or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms,  $R^{32}$  is a single bond or a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene or fluorinated alkylene group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms,  $R^{33}$  is hydrogen or an acid labile group,  $R^{34}$  is fluorine or a straight, branched or cyclic fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms,  $d$  is 1 or 2, and  $e$  is an integer of 0 to 4, satisfying  $1 \leq d+e \leq 5$ .

7. (Original) The polymer of claim 6 wherein the recurring units of formula (5) have the following formula (5a) or (5b):



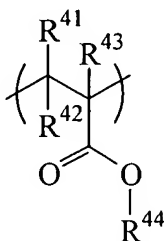
(5a)



(5b)

wherein  $R^{33}$  is as defined above,  $R^{35}$  to  $R^{40}$  each are hydrogen, fluorine or an alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, at least either one of  $R^{35}$  and  $R^{36}$  contains at least one fluorine atom, at least either one of  $R^{37}$  and  $R^{38}$  contains at least one fluorine atom, and at least either one of  $R^{39}$  and  $R^{40}$  contains at least one fluorine atom.

8. (Original) The polymer of claim 2, further comprising recurring units of the following general formula (6):



(6)

wherein  $R^{41}$  to  $R^{43}$  each are hydrogen, fluorine or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl or fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, and  $R^{44}$  is hydrogen, an acid labile group, an adhesive group or a straight, branched or cyclic fluorinated alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydrophilic group such as hydroxyl.

9. (Original) The polymer of claim 8 wherein  $R^{43}$  in formula (6) is trifluoromethyl.

10. (Original) A resist composition comprising the polymer of claim 2.

11. (Original) A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) the polymer of claim 2,
- (B) an organic solvent, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.

12. (Original) The resist composition of claim 11, further comprising (D) a basic compound.



13. (Original) The resist composition of claim 11, further comprising (E) a dissolution inhibitor.

14. (Original) A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:

applying the resist composition of claim 10 onto a substrate to form a coating,

heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation in a wavelength band of 100 to 180 nm or 1 to 30 nm through a photomask, and

optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.

15. (Original) The pattern forming process of claim 14 wherein the high-energy radiation is an F<sub>2</sub> laser beam, Ar<sub>2</sub> laser beam or soft x-ray.

16. (New) A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) the polymer of claim 3,
- (B) an organic solvent, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.

17. (New) A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) the polymer of claim 4,
- (B) an organic solvent, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.

18. (New) A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) the polymer of claim 6,
- (B) an organic solvent, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.

19. (New) A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) the polymer of claim 8,
- (B) an organic solvent, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.